

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AID-20 IGA-02 FEAE-00 OMB-01

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PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

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TAGS: ENRG, EAID, TECH, SEDU, NI

SUBJECT: SOVIET OIL EXPERTS WORKING IN NIGERIA

REFS: A. LAGOS 3371 OF APRIL 21, 1972

B. LAGOS 4393 OF MAY 31, 1973

C. LAGOS 2598 OF MARCH 28, 1974

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. SUMMARY. LONG-AWAITED SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT IN OIL AND GAS SECTOR HAS FINALLY MATERIALIZED. FOURTEEN RUSSIANS ARE NOW WORKING WITHIN NIGERIAN NATIONAL OIL CORPORATION (NNOC), AND THREE HAVE ARRIVED TO START UP THE PETROLEUM TRAINING INSTITUTE. END SUMMARY.

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2. FOURTEEN RUSSIANS (SEVEN PROFESSIONALS AND SEVEN INTERPRETERS) ARRIVED LAGOS IN MAY TO WORK IN NNOC. AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REPORTED IN REFC, THE RUSSIANS ARE NOT UNDERTAKING OFFSHORE

SEISMIC WORK AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED (REF B). ACCORDING TO THEIR BOSS, NNOC EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION MANAGER MARINHO, THE SEVEN PROFESSIONALS ARE EXPERTS IN DIFFERENT FIELDS AND ARE ENGAGED "IN SPECIFIC TASKS OF MY CHOOSING." ACCORDING TO HIS SECRETARY, NERINHO "KNOWS HOW TO HANDLE THE RUSSIANS AND WILL KEEP THEM DOWN THERE (POINTING TO THE OTHER END OF THE BUILDING)."

3. THREE ADDITIONAL RUSSIANS (REPORTEDLY TWO PROFESSIONALS AND ONE INTERPRETER) ARRIVED IN JULY TO HELP ORGANIZE AND STAFF THE PETROLEUM TRAINING INSTITUTE (PTI) IN WARRI. TWO SHIPMENTS OF EQUIPMENT FOR PTI HAVE ALSO ARRIVED FROM SOVIET UNION AND ARE IN STORAGE AT WARRI. A PRESS RELEASE AUGUST 28 ANNOUNCED THAT "MOST OF THE TRAINING EQUIPMENT AND TUTORS FROM RUSSIA HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED," AND INSTITUTE TO OPEN IN TEMPORARY BUILDING NEXT JANUARY. NEWSPAPERS HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY CARRIED LENGTHY ANNOUNCEMENT RECRUITING LARGE NUMBER OF NIGERIAN PROFESSIONALS AND JUNIOR STAFF.

4. PTI COUNCIL MET SEPTEMBER 6 AND CONFIRMED THAT INSTITUTE WOULD TEMPORARILY OCCUPY SITE OF FORMER SHELL-BP DRILLING SCHOOL IN UGHELLI (ABOUT 20 MILES FROM WARRI) WHICH CAN ACCOMMODATE 96 STUDENTS. ALL STUDENTS WILL BE SPONSORED BY NNOC, THE EXISTING REFINERY (NPRC), OR THE SECOND REFINERY PROJECT. INITIAL COURSES OF 15-16 STUDENTS EACH WILL TAKE TWO YEARS AND COVER THE FOLLOWING SIX SPECIALIZATIONS: DRILLING RIG MAINTENANCE MECHANIC, DRILLING RIG MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN, INSTRUMENT ELECTRICIAN, FITTER, LABORATORY TECHNICIAN, OIL AND GAS PROCESSING (REFINERY) OPERATOR.

5. COMMENT: THE RUSSIANS' ARRIVAL RESULTS FROM AGREEMENTS MADE IN 1972 (REF A) AND 1973 (REF B) AT POLITICAL LEVELS OF NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT. WORKING LEVEL PETROLEUM OFFICIALS ARE INDIFFERENT ABOUT WHAT THE RUSSIANS MIGHT ACCOMPLISH, AND EXPATRIATE OILMEN HERE UNIVERSALLY RIDICULE SOVIET OIL TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING METHODS. ALSO TAKING INTO ACCOUNT LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AND ALL THE PROBLEMS OF CREATING NEW INSTITUTIONS IN THIS LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRY, THE ODDS DISFAVOR ANY MAJOR IMPACT OF THE TWO SOVIET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS ON THE NIGERIAN OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY.

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6. THE EMBASSY NONETHELESS FINDS THE PROSPECT OF FOURTEEN RUSSIANS ON THE INSIDE OF NNOC, THE ONLY FOREIGNERS WORKING THERE SO FAR, TO BE SOMEWHAT DISQUIETING. WE FEEL CERTAIN THAT MARINHO SKILLFULLY MANUVERED THE RUSSIANS AWAY FROM THE WORK HE CONSIDERED THE MOST IMPORTANT (SEISMIC) AND NOW BELIEVES THEY CAN BE KEPT USEFULLY EMPLOYED ON AD HOC PROJECTS. MANAGEMENT IS NOT MARINHO'S STRONGEST ABILITY, HOWEVER, AND THE

RUSSIANS, IF THEY WANT TO UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATIONS OF THEIR OWN,
WILL HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY.

7. FYI: TWO OF THE THREE PTI EXPERTS ARE NAMED ALEXANDER
KARASIC AND VICTOR DEMTCHENKO.
REINHARDT

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